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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Sixth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 28 November 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ALSTON

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN reminded members that the Committee had pioneered the procedure of adopting concluding observations as the final phase in its consideration of reports. He noted that other treaty bodies, such as the Committee against Torture and the Human Rights Committee, had recently adopted similar procedures, with a view to securing a clear, concise and unified response to reports. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was thus no longer alone in adopting that approach, which had become common practice. He stressed the need for the widest possible informal consultations among members during preparation of the concluding observations.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (agenda item 7)

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Panama (E/1984/6/Add.19, E/1986/4/Add.22, E/1988/5/Add.9, E/1989/5/Add.5) (continued)

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Ucros, Ms. Vallarino and Mr. Velásquez (Panama) took places at the Committee table.

3. The CHAIRMAN invited Mr. Rattray to begin the concluding observations phase of the Committee's consideration of the report of Panama.

4. Mr. RATTRAY said that members of the Committee had noted that the report by Panama had been presented against a background of the political turmoil resulting from the United States invasion, which had created great disorder in all sectors throughout the country, with serious consequences for the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. Against that background, it was gratifying that the Government of Panama had been prepared to establish a dialogue with the Committee. The presence of the Panamanian delegation had enabled members to gain a clearer appreciation of the situation obtaining in that country.

5. The report submitted by Panama had been too generalized and legalistic in nature, merely enumerating legislative decrees, rather than giving details of practical measures taken to secure implementation of the Covenant. The Committee therefore welcomed the further details given by the delegation of Panama in the oral presentation, although it noted that a number of questions raised by the pre-sessional working group remained unanswered.

6. Concern had been expressed by some members of the Committee regarding forced evictions in the barrios and the need to ensure that such evictions did not deny the most vulnerable sectors of Panamanian society the right to adequate housing.

7. Members of the Committee had noted that the indigenous peoples were among the less privileged in that society, and that the rate of illiteracy among them was quite high, despite the provisions for compulsory education. In that

regard, note had been taken of the fact that the indigenous populations lived on reservations, often in remote areas, and were determined to maintain their traditions, customs and laws.

8. The question of the reported high incidence of drug abuse and drug trafficking had been raised. It had been noted that there was an alarmingly high rate of involvement of foreigners in those activities.

9. The view had been expressed that the restrictions placed on the participation of foreigners in the Executive Committee of Trade Unions were not in conformity with article 8 of the Covenant. Concern had also been expressed regarding the unequal distribution of household income in Panama, and the Government of Panama was requested to indicate measures proposed to redress that situation.

10. Mr. SIMMA fully endorsed Mr. Rattray's remarks as reflecting the view of the Committee. His only reservation concerned the question of forced evictions, regarding which he felt that a fuller and more strongly worded text was called for. He wished to submit to the Committee a text which he had drafted in consultation with Mr. Wimer Zambrano and Mrs. Jiménez Butragueño, and which the Committee might adopt as its concluding observation on the question of forced evictions in Panama. That text stated that several detailed questions had been asked concerning both housing rights and evictions in Panama. The information provided by the delegation of Panama was considered unsatisfactory by the Committee for three reasons.

11. First, the Government's claim that 3,000 persons had been affected by the bombing of El Chorrillo differed substantially from all other estimates, which placed the figure at between 12,500 and 20,000. The absence of reliable census figures on the population of El Chorrillo prior to the bombing might account for the disparity in the estimates. The Committee viewed that disparity with alarm, in view of the obligations incumbent upon the Government under the Covenant.

12. Secondly, the responses given to questions concerning the current living conditions of residents of El Chorrillo made homeless by the bombing differed substantially from other information made available to the Committee. The Committee had received information pointing to the many complaints made by residents who had been provided with alternative accommodation, regarding the distance they must now travel to and from places of employment by relatively expensive public transportation, and regarding the generally poor quality of the housing in the resettlement sites. Moreover, two years after the invasion, a large number of persons had still to be rehoused.

13. Thirdly, under the terms of the Covenant, the justification provided for the actions carried out by Panamanian and United States forces in Tocumen, San Miguelito and Panamá Viejo in early 1990, which had affected over 5,000 persons, was unacceptable as a reason for forcibly removing people from their homes. Searches for drugs, arms and criminals were frequently cited as justification for evictions. According to information received by the Committee, no drugs or arms had been found during those three actions. However, a large number of houses had been demolished, in spite of the fact that the persons affected had lived in the area concerned for more than two

years. Additionally, those evictions had not been accompanied by legal eviction orders. The Committee was of the view that evictions carried out in that way not only infringed the right to adequate housing, but also infringed inhabitants' rights to privacy and security of the home.

14. Mr. VELASQUEZ (Panama) thanked members of the Committee for their concluding observations, and requested that they should be submitted to his delegation in writing.

15. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of the report of Panama. He assured the Permanent Representative of Panama that the concluding observations would be included in the Committee's report on its sixth session, which would be forwarded to the Permanent Mission in due course. He thanked the delegation of Panama for its participation in a constructive dialogue with the Committee.

16. Mr. Ucros, Ms. Vallarino and Mr. Velásquez (Panama) withdrew.

The meeting was suspended at 3.25 p.m. and resumed at 3.30 p.m.

Afghanistan (E/1990/5/Add.8, E/1984/6/Add.12) (continued)

17. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Amani, Mr. Damoon and Mr. Wahadi (Afghanistan) took places at the Committee table.

18. The CHAIRMAN invited Mrs. Jiménez Butragueño to open the concluding observations phase of the Committee's consideration of the report on Afghanistan.

19. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO noted that the Committee had thanked the Government of Afghanistan for submitting its report on articles 1 to 15 of the Covenant at the present session, and had expressed its satisfaction at the initiation of a dialogue with Afghanistan as a State party. With regard to the report, the Committee had considered it to be unduly legalistic, since it did not provide data on practical implementation of the provisions of the Covenant, or on the true situation in Afghanistan with regard to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

20. The Committee thanked the delegation of Afghanistan for replying to the 36 questions put by the pre-sessional working group, and to the questions put by members of the Committee. While the delegation of Afghanistan had provided useful additional information, answers to some of the Committee's questions and concerns had not been fully satisfactory. First, the Committee had expressed its concern at the situation regarding guarantees of respect for fundamental freedoms, and at the treatment of political prisoners. The Committee had been particularly concerned at the problem of the 5 million Afghan refugees, accounting for one third of all refugees in the world, and, in particular, at the state of implementation of the decrees to facilitate their return, referred to by the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Ermacora, in paragraph 32 of document E/CN.4/1991/31. It had also expressed concern regarding the victims of the war, especially children.

21. Special consideration had been given to the situation of women, in view of the fact that, although the Government had lodged no reservation at the time of ratification, so that article 3 of the Covenant was fully applicable in Afghanistan, some provisions of Islamic law, and also ancestral customs predating Islam, might impede full application of that article and prevent full respect for the principle of equality of rights between the sexes.

22. Lastly, the Committee had noted with interest the situation regarding the principles of freedom to form and join trade unions, tripartism, collective bargaining and the right to strike, set forth in article 8 of the Covenant, which Afghanistan, as a State party, was obliged to respect. In the light of all those considerations, the Committee was requesting the Government of Afghanistan to submit additional information on those issues. With regard to the situation of women, the Committee requested full answers to the questions put by the pre-sessional working group regarding the situation of women in Afghan society (their participation in political, social and trade union activity and their position in the field of work and professional activities, both in private economic activity and in public service, particularly at the senior level, and developments in that situation during the past five years); and as to whether full equality of rights between men and women had been achieved in Afghanistan in all areas of law (in civil law, particularly family law, penal and labour law), with an indication of any discrepancies that still existed and the measures planned to eliminate them.

23. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of the report of Afghanistan. He thanked the Vice-Minister of Justice and the other members of the delegation of Afghanistan for their willingness to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Committee.

24. Mr. Amani, Mr. Damoon and Mr. Wahidi (Afghanistan) withdrew.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (E/1988/5/Add.6) (continued)

25. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Chae Ryang Il, Mr. Li Tae Jun and Mr. Pak Dok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) took places at the Committee table.

26. Mr. CHAE Ryang Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), replying to questions from the Committee, said that by 1953, there had been widespread destruction of both material and human resources. There was not a single university and only 43 secondary schools remained throughout the country. Teaching aids and scientific equipment for schools were lacking. There was also a shortage of teachers: furthermore the economic situation did not permit sufficient funds to be allocated to the development of education. In addition, the difficulties experienced by Koreans in learning foreign languages, especially English and French, proved a bar to the acquisition of foreign culture.

27. The Constitution provided for parental right of choice in education. Furthermore, article 54 of the Constitution guaranteed freedom of religion while article 53 authorized a variety of activities by social organizations. Accordingly, many schools had been established by religious foundations or by social organizations such as the women's or the farmers' unions to which

parents could send their children if they chose. There were also special schools for gifted children and a few private schools in particular sectors, such as computer training. Very young children could attend crèches or kindergarten if the parents so wished, thus facilitating the employment of women. Emphasis was laid on the development of young children, particularly on their physical education. Access to higher education was strictly regulated by competitive examination. In 1990, the intake of university and college students had been 195,000, with 100,000 coming directly from secondary schools and 95,000 having completed a period of employment after leaving school. In 1989, girls had constituted 51 per cent of primary and secondary school pupils and 42 per cent of university students. All universities were open to both sexes without discrimination but there was a tendency for women to specialize in education and men in scientific subjects. Parents, social organizations and the State were all actively involved in improving education and in promoting an atmosphere conducive to learning. Schools had parent-teacher guidance committees which met regularly once a month. They could make suggestions for changes: for example, a recommendation from the committees of specialized technical schools that they should be upgraded to colleges had been accepted by the State. Rural and city schools offered the same standards and the same textbooks were used throughout the country. In that connection, the use of the words "monolithic educational system", in paragraph 17 of the country report (E/1988/5/Add.6) was a mistake of translation. The position would be better described by a word such as "uniform". Efforts were made to promote knowledge about the science and technology of other countries. Article 65 of the Constitution provided for cultural exchanges and scientific agreements with foreign countries. In 1990, 180 teachers went abroad and 166 foreign lecturers came to the Democratic People's Republic. In the same year 800 students went abroad to Eastern Europe, Asia and Western Europe, including France and Switzerland, and 400 foreign students came to the country. His Government's cooperation with UNICEF and UNESCO was increasing steadily: in September 1990, a workshop on preschool education had been organized in cooperation with UNICEF.

28. In order to further international understanding and peace, teachers were trained to teach world history and world geography; world literature, music and art were studied at universities. Selected world literature was published in translation. Children's stories, which were highly popular, were also published in translation. Human rights was not taught as a separate subject in educational institutions, but information was given about the rights of the child and the Covenants and translations of them were available in libraries and schools. Human Rights Day was celebrated by special lectures. Teachers were actively involved in editing text books and in organizing curricula for final approval by the State Education Commission.

29. In addition to scholarships of various kinds, schoolchildren and students enjoyed many benefits: no fees were payable at boarding schools, they received free medical care and they paid only 40 to 50 per cent of the normal price for text books. Uniforms were provided cheaply through university shops. In addition, the State spent 585 won per head every year on social activities for students and schoolchildren. The main purpose was to train young people to be competent future builders of society through their knowledge, their high morals and their good health. The purpose of physical education was solely to ensure a healthy rising generation.

30. Teachers received relatively higher salaries than other workers, who averaged 100 won per month, whereas the average for teachers was about 130 won. Such salaries were larger than they appeared because the people-centred policy of the State ensured that basic necessities such as food, clothing and housing were provided very cheaply; for example, the monthly rent for a four-bedroomed house, including electricity, heating and water was 10 won. There was no discrimination against women in teaching appointments and if they had more than two children they received the salary appropriate for an eight-hour day for six hours daily work. They received 150 days maternity leave on full pay in addition to the regular paid leave.

31. There was no problem of ethnic minorities, since all the people spoke a single language and had the same culture and customs; the nation had lived from time immemorial on the same territory.

32. Turning to the problem of the eradication of illiteracy, he recalled that in 1945, the time of the liberation of the country, there had been 2.3 million illiterates, accounting for nearly 80 per cent of the adult population. Accordingly, the literacy campaign had been assigned priority as a most important factor in the construction of a new society. It had been no easy task to eradicate illiteracy within a short period of time, since millions of adults were involved. A large number of teachers had to be provided, as well as great quantities of teaching material. Since most of those concerned were workers engaged in productive activities, it had been necessary to arrange for them to learn on the job without interrupting their productive work. At the same time, the task of building a new society had to go on unimpeded. The nationwide literacy campaign had been conducted under the State's unified plan of guidance, which set up State machinery for the control and guidance of the campaign, as well as a unit in the Education Department to ensure uniformity in the conduct of the literacy campaign; in addition, a special committee was set up, with the task of investigating the extent of illiteracy and ensuring that illiterate persons attended literacy classes.

33. In that connection, it should be remembered that State guidance could be fruitful only when the masses themselves were actively involved. The necessary zeal had had to be instilled into both learners and teachers. An awareness of the importance of the campaign had had to be propagated. Many persons had taken an active interest in learning but some - especially peasants and women - were not fully motivated because of ignorance due to the influence of the older society. That influence had produced a passive attitude on the part of those who said "What is the use of learning now?". It had been necessary to root out those ideas and to impress upon the working people that knowledge was power and ignorance was ruin. Accordingly, the slogan "Study, study and continue to study" had been posted everywhere in factories, farms and streets. Propaganda to promote literacy had also taken the form of lectures, talks and songs with literacy as the theme. All available teachers and university students, and indeed all literate persons, had been mobilized so that one person taught 10 other persons to read and write; those 10 persons, in their turn, taught 100 others to read and write. That method had proved decisive in securing the services of the large number of teachers needed. As for classrooms, the problem had been solved by using institutions, enterprises, dwelling houses and schools. In short, the nationwide campaign turned the

whole country into one great school. By March 1949, in less than four years, 2.3 million persons had been made literate. That achievement represented the first victory of his people in the struggle against the backwardness left by the old society.

34. Mr. PAK Dok Hun, replying to the questions which had been raised, explained that the main difficulty encountered after liberation by his country with respect to the development of literature and the arts was the painful fact that numerous national relics had been taken away by foreigners during the 46 years of the colonial period. In addition, many such items forming part of the national cultural heritage had been destroyed during the 1950-1953 war. The main difficulty, however, was the fact that a large proportion of the adult population was illiterate. In addition, the traditional national arts had suffered terribly from the colonial policy of obliterating the national culture. Also, Western music and painting had attracted so much interest that the public tended to look down upon their own culture while admiring that of other countries.

35. A further difficulty arose from the fact that the country had been divided for 46 years, so that it was not possible to promote a uniform cultural development.

36. Furthermore, writers and artists at the outset of the construction of socialism had had a tendency to remain working at their desks without mixing with the people. That situation had produced artistic works which did not depict reality and which did not attract the interest of the masses. Lastly, amateur art groups had a tendency to professionalize their artistic work.

37. Those were the main difficulties encountered by his country in the matter. Article 60 of the Constitution stated: "Citizens are free to engage in scientific, literary and artistic pursuits". Replying to the question by some members of the Committee about the existence of organs or institutions to guide the development of artistic and literary work, he stressed that the Party and the State only provided guidance, in conformity with the feelings, desires and requirements of the working people. Consequently, the State directives in the matter promoted the creation of literary and artistic works which were national in form and socialist in content. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Literature and the Arts directed and organized artistic and literary activities in conformity with that approach. Subordinated to those Ministries, there were creative literary organizations, film studios, dramatic art companies, film distribution centres and publication centres responsible for the creation and dissemination of writings and artistic works. He stressed that the guidance of the State was based on the tastes and interests of a working people; that approach, however, did not mean that works departing from the approved standards could not be created. He could give the example of a song which had become popular recently and the lyrics of which were based on a poem going back to the period before the revolution which depicted love between a boy and a girl. Also, many films were produced which criticized leading personalities.

38. Any citizen could write freely or create artistic works but the question whether the book would be published or the artistic work exhibited was another matter. For that to occur, it would have to be submitted to the National

Examination Committee (an institution which existed in other countries as well) consisting of leading members of the Ministry of Literature and the Arts and of experienced professional artists. He stressed that no Party official was a member and that there was no interference from the Party with the work of the Committee. The Committee was responsible for ensuring that objectionable material dealing with war and violence was kept to a minimum. Much creative work in the matter of literature and art did not go through the Committee. However, literary and artistic works designed for entertainment on a nationwide scale had to be approved by the Committee before they were sold to the public or performed.

39. There were no private publishing houses in the country or private film studies or cinemas. Freedom of the press was guaranteed by article 53 of the Constitution. As far as he knew, however, there had been no request from any private organization to set up a publishing house.

40. Foreign films were shown regularly on television to large audiences on Saturday and Sunday. Most foreign films came from India, the Soviet Union, China, Egypt and Algeria. Moreover, although it was true that his country constantly called for the withdrawal of the United States from South Korea, there was no objection to benefiting from art and literature created by persons in the United States. Thus, such United States film classics as "Roots" and "Gone with the Wind" had been shown and Korean children enjoyed cartoon films from the United States.

41. Many foreign books had been translated as few people read and wrote foreign languages. Foreign books as well as foreign newspapers and magazines were available at the Grand People's Study Home with its 600 reading rooms. The libraries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Trade, the many research institutions and universities, as well as foreign language schools, had a large stock of foreign books. At those institutions, there were regular showings of foreign films in their original versions. Pursuant to cultural exchange agreements with foreign countries and with individual companies abroad, foreign theatre companies visited the country and Korean companies toured abroad every year.

42. In 1990, a Pan-National Unification Concert had been held both at Pyongyang and at Seoul in South Korea with the participation of musicians and singers from north and south of the country as well as overseas Koreans from the Soviet Union, China, Japan and even the United States.

43. Turning to the question of the Juche philosophy, he stressed that it was essentially a people-centred philosophy which considered man to be the master of his own destiny and the decisive factor in transforming the world. That approach was based on the idea that man must display independence, creativity and consciousness. It served to combat the unfortunate tendency to look down upon one's own culture and admire that of the larger countries surrounding the Democratic People's Republic. That approach was fully consistent with article 14 of the Covenant. The promotion of the people's own creativity did not mean any opposition to the ideas and thoughts of other peoples.

44. The overall development of the country was rendered difficult by its division. His Government, nevertheless, did its best to promote stable living conditions for the population. Its citizens enjoyed freedom of expression and freedom of movement over the whole of its territory except in the vicinity of the military zone.

45. In conclusion, he said that his delegation would attempt to answer any further questions put to it.

46. Mr. SIMMA said that he had understood from the government representative's statement that one of the problems encountered after the liberation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from Japanese colonial domination in 1945 had been the considerable number of Western paintings that had had to be done away with, and he asked when exactly such paintings had actually entered the country, since the Communist Party had taken over immediately after the liberation and he did not imagine that the Japanese authorities would have encouraged such painting.

47. Mr. PAK Dok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that Western painting had been introduced during the period of colonial rule between 1910 and 1945. He pointed out that his country had an age-old tradition of specifically Korean painting.

48. Mr. NENEMAN said that, although interesting answers had been given to many questions, some had remained unanswered, possibly for reasons beyond the delegation's control. A case in point had been the question raised about the affirmation that the President's theses gave perfect answers to all theoretical and practical problems arising in education.

49. He sought further clarification on some points. For instance, with reference to the statement that decisions concerning publication or performance of creative works were taken by a committee, he assumed that such decisions were based on the premise that such works should be socialist in content and nationalist in form, failing which they would probably be prohibited. To take a specific, if somewhat extreme, example, it could be assumed that portrayals of nudes in artistic works would not be allowed. He asked, therefore, whether there was free artistic expression or, on the contrary, strict rules based on very narrow criteria.

50. Mr. CHANG Ryang Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the "Theses on Socialist Education" of President Kim Il Sung, published in 1977, had mapped out the direction which educational development should take. On the basis of those guidelines, the people, including educationists, teachers, students, parents and even religious bodies, had been actively involved in the debate on how the education system and educational content and methods should be reshaped and improved. The long-standing committee for educational guidance, which was composed of government officials, educational authorities, teachers, social organizations of all kinds, as well as parents, and met once a month, monitored progress in education and examined all problems and issues raised by teachers, students and other interested parties themselves, on an ongoing basis. The resolutions it adopted, which were thus an expression of the will of the people, subsequently had force of law after adoption by the Council of Ministers. It could thus be seen that the theses

laid down the basic direction that education should take, but the system itself was seen as an evolving process and was constantly updated, further developed and enriched to meet the needs of the people objectively. An example were the examinations set for admission to higher educational institutions.

51. Mr. PAK Dok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the guidelines formulated by the State and the Party for the development of literature and the arts did not mean that all works contrary to those principles were prohibited. Feature films about all aspects of life, including life in foreign countries, were shown regularly, as were numerous foreign films, for instance at the film festival of the non-aligned countries. In response to the comment about nude paintings, he said that the traditional way of life in Korean society and the modesty of Korean women must be respected. To his knowledge, such portrayals were alien to the Korean tradition.

52. Mrs. BONOAN-DANDAM said that there was another facet to Mr. Neneman's pertinent question about freedom of artistic expression, namely the opportunity for any person to appreciate freely a work of art of his own choosing. If a group of people was assigned the task of determining which works were in conformity with the good of the people and, if not, banning it from public view, how could members of the public at large benefit fully from free creative expression?

53. Mr. PAK Dok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that works that had not passed the National Examination Committee could be enjoyed in private, but all works for publication or public viewing or performance were subject to the Committee's authorization. It was, however, very rare for the Committee to veto works submitted to it.

54. Mr. KONATE, commenting on the use of the word "immortal" in connection with President Kim Il Sung's theses on education, observed that, in accordance with the concept of historical materialism, developments in society - and hence theories - should surely be seen as a dialectical and dynamic process.

55. Mr. RATTRAY said that the discussion on freedom of artistic expression put him in an intellectual and cultural dilemma. Even in Western countries, films and other productions had to pass boards of censors, and works contrary to public morals might be banned. It was still not altogether clear to him whether the prohibition of certain works by the Korean authorities was based on the criterion that in their judgement they were contrary to public morals.

56. Mr. PAK Dok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that to his knowledge every country had some kind of system to check films before they were released to the public, and the Korean system was no exception. Artistic works and publications which constituted incitement to hatred, violence, crime and war, for instance, would not be passed, but the Committee would examine the content and give its opinions to the authors.

57. The CHAIRMAN thanked the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for their participation.

58. Mr. Chae Ryang Il, Mr. Li Tae Jun and Mr. Pak Dok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) withdrew.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued)

59. The CHAIRMAN said that the issue of artistic freedom, which had arisen during the Committee's consideration of the previous report, seemed to be a good example of the difficulties faced by the Committee in the absence of a comprehensive range of bench-marks or established positions on issues raised by the Covenant, and might usefully be the subject of a general comment.

60. Mr. KONATE said that, with a view to drafting a general comment on article 15, he would gladly take the lead in preparing some initial thoughts on artistic freedom for discussion at the next session.

61. The CHAIRMAN thanked Mr. Konate for his offer, which would be an important first step towards drafting a general comment.

62. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO expressed the view, which had also been expressed by other members of the Committee on other occasions, that the approach adopted by the Committee during the concluding observations phase of its consideration of the reports of Panama and Afghanistan was not in fact the most appropriate approach. Some members felt strongly that the concluding observations phase of the proceedings should take place in closed session. He saw no advantage in permitting representatives of State parties, who had already had an opportunity to put their countries' views, to be present at those sessions. Indeed, there was a danger that, if delegations were present, the proceedings might end in acrimony. He asked the Chairman to take note of his comments, which, he hoped, would be borne in mind when, at some appropriate time, the Committee came to review its work methods.

63. The CHAIRMAN said that the matter raised by Mr. Wimer Zambrano was clearly an issue on which some members felt strongly. The possibility of conducting the final phase of consideration of reports in closed session was an option to which serious consideration should be given.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.